

专八阅读：Examinations Exert a Pernicious Influence on Education  
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Examinations Exert a Pernicious Influence on Education We might marvel at the progress made in every field of study, but the methods of testing a person ' s knowledge and ability remain as primitive as ever they were. It really is extraordinary that after all these years, educationists have still failed to devise anything more efficient and reliable than examinations. For all the pious claim that examinations text what you know, it is common knowledge that they more often do the exact opposite. They may be a good means of testing memory, or the knack of working rapidly under extreme pressure, but they can tell you nothing about a person ' s true ability and aptitude. As anxiety-makers, examinations are second to none. That is because so much depends on them. They are the mark of success of failure in our society. Your whole future may be decided in one fateful day. It doesn ' t matter that you weren ' t feeling very well, or that your mother died. Little things like that don ' t count: the exam goes on. No one can give of his best when he is in mortal terror, or after a sleepless night, yet this is precisely what the examination system expects him to do. The moment a child begins school, he enters a world of vicious competition where success and failure are clearly defined and measured. Can we wonder at the increasing

number of ' drop-outs ' : young people who are written off as utter failures before they have even embarked on a career? Can we be surprised at the suicide rate among students? A good education should, among other things, train you to think for yourself. The examination system does anything but that. What has to be learnt is rigidly laid down by a syllabus, so the student is encouraged to memorize. Examinations do not motivate a student to read widely, but to restrict his reading. they do not enable him to seek more and more knowledge, but induce cramming. They lower the standards of teaching, for they deprive the teacher of all freedoms. Teachers themselves are often judged by examination results and instead of teaching their subjects, they are reduced to training their students in exam techniques which they despise. The most successful candidates are not always the best educated. they are the best trained in the technique of working under duress. The results on which so much depends are often nothing more than a subjective assessment by some anonymous examiner. Examiners are only human. They get tired and hungry. they make mistakes. Yet they have to mark stacks of hastily scrawled scripts in a limited amount of time. They work under the same sort of pressure as the candidates. And their word carries weight. After a judge ' s decision you have the right of appeal, but not after an examiner ' s. There must surely be many simpler and more effective ways of assessing a person ' s true abilities. Is it cynical to suggest that examinations are merely a profitable business for the institutions that run them? This is what it boils down to in the last analysis. The best comment on the system is this illiterate message

recently scrawled on a wall: ' I were a teenage 0drop-out and now I are a teenage millionaire. ' 1. 100Test 下载频道开通，各类考试题目直接下载。详细请访问 [www.100test.com](http://www.100test.com)